



Resources for Pet Owners



Games, Games, Games!

Games are a fun way to bond with your dog and keep your dog mentally and physically active. Several childhood games can be easily modified to play with a canine companion. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

Hide and Seek: Put your dog in a stay and hide in a different room or somewhere outside. Call for your dog until they find you. When they find you reward them with praise or a small treat. When your dog gets better at the game, just say "find me" once and help them out if they are confused. This is a fun game but it is also a great way to reinforce your dog's stay. If the dog breaks the stay, put them back in the position where they started.

The Cup Game: Place a yummy treat under a clean empty soup can or a plastic cup. Have the dog stay back from the container until you release them to find the treat. They need to knock the object over to get the reward. Have the dog practice a sit or down stay until you release them. Start the game by using a light cup and a really smelly treat like hot dogs. As the dog gets better at the game, use some empty cups to test the dog and less smelly treats like dry bones. You can show your dog's intelligence off for your friends. This is a real crowd pleaser.

Bobbing for Hot Dogs: Fill a small swimming pool or bucket with water and put cut pieces of hot dogs in the pool for the dogs to find. If your dog enjoys fruit, you can also use cut pieces of apples or other safe vegetables. This is a great game for puppy parties; just make sure all the dogs are friendly!

Dig It: If your dog enjoys digging but you are tired of losing your petunias, make them their own sandpit. Use a child's swimming pool or a regular sandbox and hide Kongs or fun toys for the dog to find. This will make the sandbox a really rewarding place to dig. Rotate the toys out to keep the dog interested. Do not use regular soil or sand from your backyard. Soil in Southern Arizona has the potential to make your dog ill because of Valley Fever spores. Cover the box at night to keep it from becoming a litter box for the neighborhood cats.

Biscuit Hunt: This works just like an Easter egg hunt. Hide small hard biscuits in the backyard or around the house. Keep the dog in a crate or in another room while you hide the biscuits. Release your dog to find the biscuits. This is a great way to keep your dog occupied as you leave for work in the morning. As an added bonus hide a Kong with peanut butter for your dog to find.

Tug of War: Tug games can be a fun activity for your dog as long as they follow the rules. Make sure you pick a toy that is appropriate for this game. If you have any questions, consult a trainer. See our handout: "Tug of War: An Enrichment Activity").

Sports: Depending on your dog's natural abilities they may also enjoy soccer, swimming, tracking or organized sports. Agility, Flyball and Lure Coursing are exciting organized sports for all different breeds of dogs. Check with your local professional trainer for agility classes.